1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 197-A]

412 truly nomadic group. All metal knife and ax
439 blades are obtained ready-made from the villagers, also metal arrow and spearheads (which are frequently used as knives). The hafting and fitting of shafts may be done by the Pygmy himself, and certainly the arrow shafts are
285 Pygmy-made. Open-mesh baskets (Fig. 41) are
439 made by the women, who also obtain close-mesh baskets (Fig. 42) from the villagers.

DRESS AND ORNAMENTATION

291 Clothing of the net hunters is also similar to
[789] that described by Schebesta, but with less ornamentation of fur and skin and less use of charms and amulets. Putnam denies the use of skins for clothing among the Pygmies he knows. Anne
287 Putnam ranks the manufacture of barkcloth as the major industry in a net-hunting camp, occupying even more time than the making and
• 286 repair of nets. Putnam once said that the Pygmies did not make nets, but obtained them from the villagers; later, he changed his opinion.[1] A net is never made complete, but in the course of repair pieces are added or removed to start a new net.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P.203-A]

224
• 286

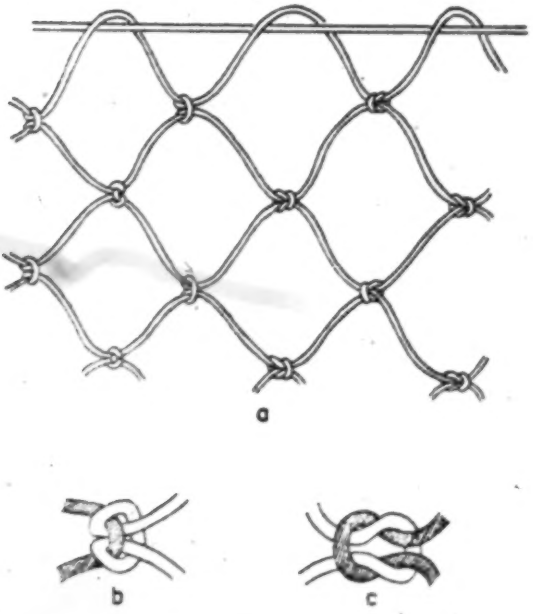
FIG. 34. Hunting net, *kuya*, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. Coiled and bound for carrying over the shoulders.

Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

catch it with their hands, put it in a basket, and continue beating. Their main object is to put up game and drive it toward the nets. There, the men are in readiness, motionless until some animal is tangled in the meshes. Then they seize it, and the owner of that particular net kills the

224



224
284
286

FIG. 36. Details of knotting used in hunting net, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri.

[P. 203-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P 212-C] DAILY LIFE

The food quest, as with the archers, is the primary concern of daily life among the net hunters. The net hunt is considerably more rewarding than the other form of hunt, although it probably occupies as much time. Care and maintenance of the nets are also laborious and time-consuming. Women gather not only as they accompany the hunt, but also on those days when the hunt stays behind in the camp. The children make a not inconsiderable contribution to the family food quest. A common occupation on a non-hunting day is for men and women to assist each other in the making of twine from *nkusa* vine. This twine is used primarily in the repair of hunting nets.

As with the archers, elimination takes place not far from the camp. Refuse is never carried away; it is merely thrown behind the huts. These practices not merely create an unpleasant smell after some weeks, but also attract armies of ants. The Mbuti themselves, however, keep their bodies scrupulously clean, and the favorite recreation of the children is playing about in the shallow streams. The men assert that they can all swim but are never seen doing so; they are certainly much afraid of deep water.

to cook the morning meal. Back in the camp they sat outside their huts, legs straight out in front of them in what seemed the most uncomfortable position possible. From there they prepared the family repast, placing green plantains in the hot ashes to roast, or concocting a stew of mushrooms and chopped leaves with whatever meat was left over from the day before, covering the pot with large leaves to trap the steam and to keep out ashes and dirt. Any little chores that had to be done were done by their daughters, who scurried around collecting dry twigs to heat the fire up more quickly, or sat over the fire with their baby brothers, carefully guarding the pot and making sure it did not upset when the burning wood subsided. The younger women, freed in this way, relaxed and set to work making themselves beautiful. They sat in full view of the camp, unashamedly painting their bodies with black paste, calling their friends over to help with the more inaccessible regions. The buttocks in particular they found difficult to paint themselves, and rather than waste such an expansive area they would either bend over in front of a friend, or lie across her lap.

The men combined business with pleasure too, usually meeting at the kumamolimo to drink from a steaming bowl of liko. The young bachelors mostly cooked their own simple breakfast here, and together they all discussed the day ahead of them—where they should go to hunt, what they might expect to find. Cephu never came over from his little camp at such times. He merely waited until all the others set off for the hunt, then he joined them.

The men also had to prepare their nets. Helping one another, they uncoiled long lengths of knotted twine, sometimes stretching for three hundred feet, inspecting every section with care. Then, standing upright, the assistant holding the net off the ground, each man coiled his net again so that it hung from one shoulder to within a few inches of his ankle. With a loose length of twine he deftly bound the coils together, gave the net a final shake and hung it from

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

some convenient branch or tree stump. Sometimes, when hunting, nets have to be set up rapidly, and anyone whose net has become tangled through poor preparation and coiling can spoil the chances of all the others.

The women have little to do by way of preparation for the hunt, other than making sure of the strength of the bark tump line by which they carry their baskets. They put some food in these in case the day's hunt is a long one, and they wrap a glowing ember from the family fire in large, damp leaves, and sit down and wait for the men to set off.

In normal times there is often a dance before everyone departs for the hunt. Men and women circle the camp, singing a hunting song, looking from right to left, clapping their hands and leaping extravagantly in imitation of the animals they hope to catch. But this was rare during the days of the molimo as all felt the lack of rest.

Another form of hunting magic, if you can call it that, was a paste made from various parts of an antelope, particularly the heart and the eye. The charred flesh is mixed with spittle and ground to a paste, then put in an inverted antelope horn and stuck in the ground near the family fire. Just before going on the hunt, members of the family smear one another with some of the paste, using a twig to dig it out of the horn. It is difficult to say whether this form of magic is of Pygmy or Negro origin. I rather think the latter, because only a few families practiced it, and they were highly criticized by the others as being antisocial. They were trying to get success for themselves at the expense of the others. On one such occasion a family had a long run of good luck, the animals always falling into their net, while others had no luck at all. It was decided that this must have been due to *anjo*, as the medicine was called, so everyone, including the offenders, agreed that the only thing to do was to destroy the horns that held the medicine. Everyone who had such a magic horn gave it to old Moke and promised not to make any more

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

into paste. Then, using a finger, she daubs the fresh cloth, which may be white, fawn, brown, or blue, with bright splotches of red. If she is using the fruit juice she carefully collects it in a cup made from the hard shell of some forest fruit, and with little twigs she draws fanciful patterns of straight lines, crisscrossing the cloth with unconventional Pygmy geometry. When the cloth is finished she throws it over the roof of her hut to dry, and looks around for something else to do.

Women usually work in twos or threes for company, and nearby a friend will be attending to some other womanly task. They spend hours at a time making the elaborate belts which hold the bark cloth in place. The material culture of the BaMbuti is minimal, and simplicity and utility are usually the main characteristics. But there is nothing simple about the belts they make. A single belt takes several weeks. First the vine has to be collected, dried, and shredded. Then the strands are tied around a stout twig in the ground. The woman holds the stick firmly between her toes and pulls a number of the strands to form the core around which she braids an outer binding. There may be as many as two hundred braided lengths to a single belt, bound decoratively in the center. Each end is worked into ties for fastening the belt tightly so that it will not only hold the bark cloth in place but also support knives, machettis, and the bundles of roots and other things that Pygmies tie to their belts while on the trail, to leave their hands and arms free.

The same vine, nkusa, is used for making hunting nets. After it has been shredded it is deftly rolled on the thigh, one strand being rolled into the end of the next so that when two strands are twined together a woman can present her husband with a length of stout cord long enough to add several feet to the family hunting net. Net-making is virtually a full-time occupation, and one in which both men and women indulge whenever they have both the spare time and the inclination. Few occupations are strictly reserved for either men or

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

286 women, and although a man will attend to his own net, repairing it [462] and adding to it, a mother will often make a complete hunting net to present to her son when he gets married.

342 356 The other major activity that goes on almost every day in any Pygmy camp is the repairing and alteration of the huts. New leaves have to be added, or the old ones changed to avoid leaks. If relatives come to visit, either the house has to be enlarged or a new one built. Whenever this happens there are repercussions throughout the camp, since people will have to change the entrances to their huts to avoid 342 looking directly into the stranger's hut. The entrances also get changed 356 if there are arguments between two families. The two disputants, 578 though they may be next door to each other, will build little "spite fences" between them, so that their huts are turned almost back to back, the walls in effect turning the doorways to face in opposite directions. Then the doorway may face into someone else's hut, and if that family is not in sympathy, their doorway in turn will be changed, and so on.

342 These changes are usually made by the women, since the hut is 462 considered the woman's property. This is one of the strongest points 593 a woman has in arguments with her husband. I have seen a woman [356] who has failed to get anywhere in a matrimonial disagreement simply [423] turn around and start methodically pulling all the leaves off the hut. Usually the husband stops her halfway. In this case, however, the husband was particularly stubborn. He waited until she had taken all the leaves off, then remarked to the camp at large that his wife was going to be dreadfully cold that night. There was nothing for her to do, without losing face, but to continue; so reluctantly, and very slowly, she started to pull out the sticks that formed the framework of her home.

By this time the camp was agog, because it had been a long time since anyone had seen a domestic argument carried quite this far. The poor woman was in tears, for she was very much in love with her

224 621 their activities and in their social organization in particular, since the degree to which cooperation is required in hunting, and the numbers of people involved, are the principal factors in determining the composition of the band.

224 **Net hunting.**—The technique of net hunting can best be described by going through the chronological events of a single day. The details of where and how to hunt are decided during the usual evening conversation period the night before. The chief argument lies in the weather; if it is going to be dry it will be better for net hunting. Since it will sometimes rain for three days, then go two days without rain, it is a matter of some speculation and prediction whether or not it will rain on a given afternoon. In general the weather permits net hunting, for it usually does not begin to rain until 4:00 P.M., and by that time the pygmies often have enough game to make the day's work profitable. The season is also important, for during the dry season the fallen leaves crackling underfoot make such a noise that stalking is hard even for a tracker so expert as the pygmy. However, this condition is good for net hunting, since it is necessary that the game hear the hunters.

224 283 286 [482] [854] The men, women, and children start out early in the morning, and the women carry their babies on their backs. The men carry the nets. These are made of cordage, about the same width as tennis nets, but a little longer. Since the length of the net is functional in the hunting, the pygmies keep it fairly constant. As one end rots away they add onto the other end, until an old net may eventually be largely replaced by these additions. However, [197] [439] the pygmies prefer new nets made by the Negroes and, furthermore, there are rarely enough nets to go around. Hence they frequently beg their hosts for more.

[P. 328-B]